

LEGISLATURE RETURNS MONDAY (JANUARY 6)

The Legislature will return on Monday, January 6, 2003, to begin the 2003-04 legislative session in earnest. The Assembly will meet in Floor Session at 11:30 a.m. The Senate will meet at 1:30 p.m. Interested persons may listen to these (and all subsequent) [Assembly](#) and [Senate](#) hearings via computer audio feed.

The Legislature met briefly on December 6, 2002, to [organize](#) and elect officers, then adjourned for the remainder of the month. During that period, Assembly Speaker Herb Wesson announced the appointment of the chairs and membership (except for isolated vacancies) of the Assembly's 27 standing committees. In keeping with recent practice, all but one of the new committee chairs is a Democrat (exception: [Lynn Daucher](#) (R-Brea), Chair of the Aging & Long Term Care Committee), and four of the new chairs are freshmen: [John Laird](#) (D-Santa Cruz) -- Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials; [Lois Wolk](#) (D-Davis) -- Human Services; [Mark Ridley-Thomas](#) (D-Los Angeles) -- Jobs, Economic Development & the Economy; and [Mark Leno](#) (D-San Francisco) -- Public Safety).

The Senate has yet to announce the committee membership for the new session.

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

The [Assembly Judiciary Committee](#) will be larger, slightly more Democratic, and composed of fewer attorneys than in the past session.

Last session's 12-member committee included nine attorneys (75%) and was split 8-4 in favor of Democrats (67%). The new committee has been expanded to 14 members, though only 13 have been appointed. Of these, nine are Democrats (64%), four are Republicans, but only seven (50%) are lawyers.

The 14-member size of the committee means that eight votes will be required to pass any bill (or 57% of the actual appointees).

The committee will continue to be chaired by Assem. [Ellen Corbett](#) (D-San Leandro), with [Tom Harman](#) (R-Newport Beach) as Vice-Chair. Corbett is entering her third and final Assembly term, while Harman is a second-term Assembly member. Both are attorneys.

The new committee members are Democrats [Loni Hancock](#) (D-Berkeley), [John Laird](#) (D-Santa Cruz), and [Cindy Montanez](#) (D-San Fernando), and Republican [Todd Spitzer](#) (R-Orange), the only attorney in the group.

UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW HEARING

Assembly Business & Professions Committee Chair [Lou Correa](#) (D-Santa Ana) has issued a press release announcing that he will be hosting an informational and fact-gathering hearing on the recent lawsuits filed against thousands of auto repair shops, restaurants and nail salons in California (many of which are in Correa's 69th Assembly District).

According to the release, "The purpose of the hearing is to gather facts and listen to testimony from constituents, business owners, and attorneys in relation to alleged abuses of California's Unfair Competition Law. . . Members of the Legislature will hear testimony, gather facts and consider possible solutions to numerous recent lawsuits that have been filed against small business owners throughout California, especially in Orange and Los Angeles Counties, with particular focus on the use of Business and Professions Code §17200 as a means to file these lawsuits."

Participants in the hearing will include the Attorney General's Office, Auto Repair Coalition, California Chamber of Commerce, California District Attorneys' Association, California Restaurant Association, Center for Public Interest Law, Civil Justice Association of California, Consumer Attorneys of California, Consumers Union, and the Nail Salon Mutual Association. The Trevor Law Group, which has initiated many of the suits in question, has also been invited to participate.

The hearing will be held at the Rancho Santiago Community College in Santa Ana on Friday, January 10, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Correa has introduced [AB 69](#) as a vehicle for legislation to address the issues stemming from these suits.

The [Assembly](#) and [Senate](#) Judiciary Committees are tentatively scheduled to hold a joint hearing on the same issue on Tuesday, January 14, at 10:00 a.m. in the State Capitol.